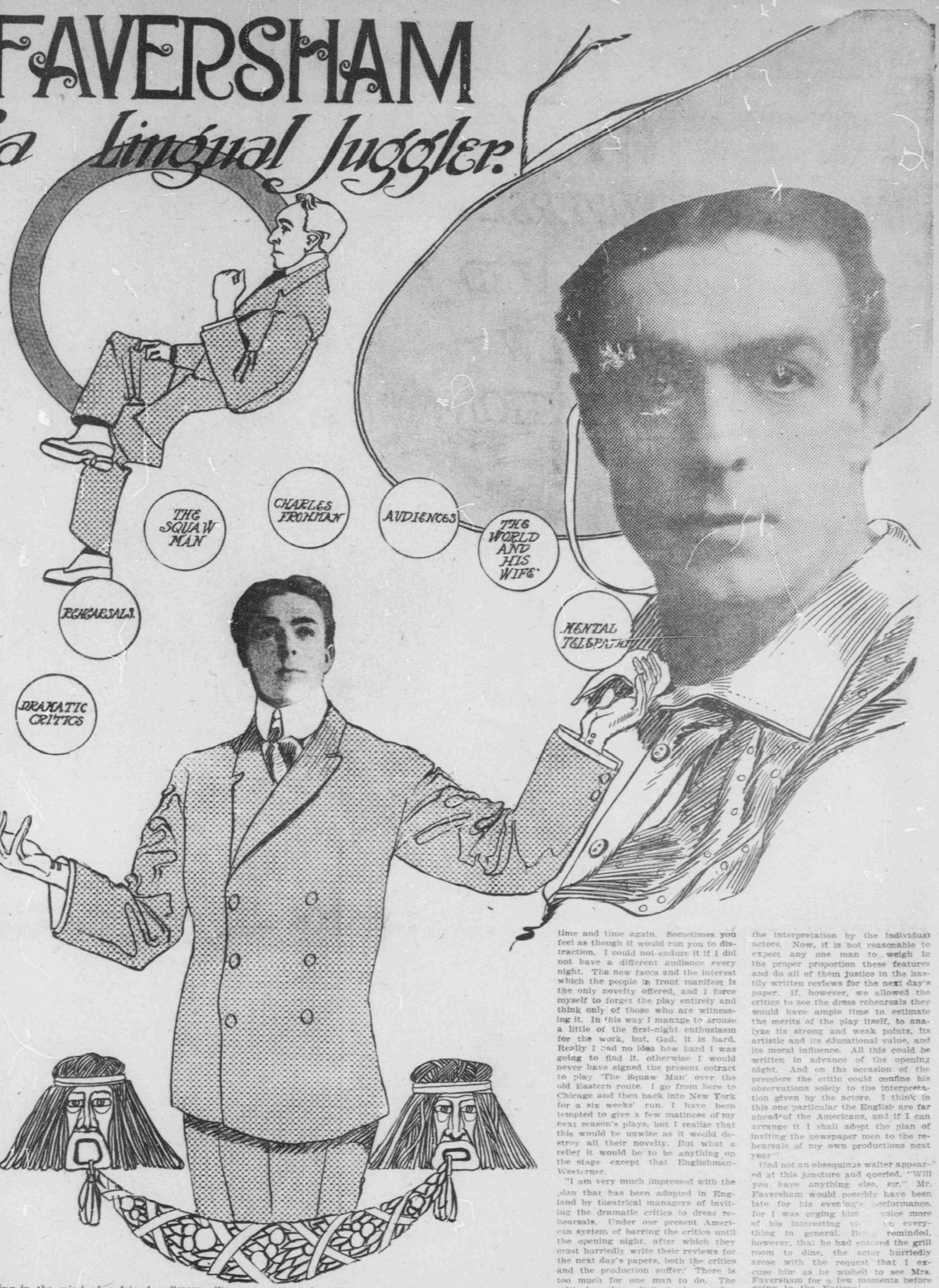
WILLIAM FAVERSHAM

In the Role of a Lingual Juggler.



The Time Has Come, ⁘ ⁘ ⁘
To Speak of Many Things;
Of Ships, and Shoes, and Sealing Wax;
Of Cabbages and Kings.

WILLIAM FAVERSHAM had just ordered his cup of "breakfast" tea when I joined him in the grill room at the Shoreham Hotel Monday evening shortly before his performance at the National. His greeting was not in any sense what I had expected, for, as he had been a matinee idol for almost a decade, I had nerved myself for an interview with an overbearing, egotistical Englishman, with a tendency to preening as though he were the cynosure of all eyes. It was an agreeable surprise to be welcomed cordially, and with a gentle courtesy that is to be found more frequently in the drawing room than in the green room.

"I am sorry that I could not see you earlier, but I remained in New York until the last possible moment so that I could bring Mrs. Faversham to Washington with me. Oh yes, the boy is upstairs, too." (The second "Favvy" of the younger generation is two weeks old).

"On what subject would you like for me to talk?" asked the Englishman.

He immediately accepted my suggestion that I did not care for him to talk at me but with me, and forthwith launched out upon such a diversified train of thought that it has been almost impossible to reconstruct all the links by which this verbal prestidigitator entertained me for an hour.

"I feel very much like apologizing to Washington for returning here this year in an old play," he began. "I don't believe in it, and I should certainly not have signed my present contract for 'The Squaw Man' had I known how irksome it was going to prove to appear in that role for more than 600 times.

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Fine Time Out West.

"I had a bully season in the far West, however. It had been some eight or ten years since I had appeared in that section of the country and the audiences gave me a rousing welcome. The play had a strong appeal for them, too. Now that I have returned East, however, where I haven't the anticipation of a new audience to spur me on, it takes all my will power to nerve myself for each performance. "I am more and more fully convinced each time I go on the stage in 'The Squaw Man' that our present system of long runs is detrimental to the art of acting and to the actor. There ought to be some relief from the monotony of it all. Now if I could just give one performance a week of something else besides 'The Squaw Man' it would be such a relief to one's nerves. For example, although I played the role of Algy in 'Lord and Lady Algy' perhaps a hundred times more than I have appeared in the Royle play, it did not become so irksome to me because I refreshed myself with other interpretations at intervals.

"And I am going to put my theory to a test next season. Yes, I have great schemes for the future. Next fall I hope to appear in Stephen Phillips' play 'Herod,' which Beerbohm Tree produced in London several years ago. Do you know, I have been longing for that play for five years, and I only secured the American rights to it a month or two ago. Of course you never can tell what a play is going to be until after the first night, but I believe that in 'Herod' I shall have the opportunity of my career. I have been on the stage in America for eighteen years and I don't believe I have ever been so enthusiastic before. The play, as you know, is of heroic mold. It handles a dramatic theme in a big way. I am going to spend the entire summer in preparing for it, and I will be assisted by Mrs. Faversham (Julie Opp), who will appear with me. But even if 'Herod' is a big success I do not intend to start another 'run.' I will alternate with 'The World and His Wife,' another play which I believe will be accepted as a virile dramatic production.

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These asterisks do not represent any unprintable language of Mr. Faversham's, but merely a sleight of tongue change of subject.

"I hadn't heard of 'The Witching Hour' when I arrived in New York a few days ago. As I walked into Charles Frohman's office I passed Harris and asked him some casual question. When I took a seat in Mr. Frohman's office he shook his head very solemnly and said, 'Favvy, that was all very unnecessary asking Harris a question like that. The time is soon coming when you will not have to ask questions or exchange a word of greeting. You will just come into my office, sit down, we will exchange thoughts and you will walk out. That is all there will be to it. In fact you won't have to come to New York to converse with me. You can just think you want to discuss the plans for this production and though you may be in Chicago and I here, we can arrange all the details at once.'

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Thought He Was Daffy.

"What on earth is the governor talking about? Is he daffy, I thought to myself. I tried to ask him what he was driving at, but it wasn't any use. He kept repeating that we were doing everything wrong and that it was a waste of time to talk about anything, that mental telepathy could do it all.

"I hadn't the slightest idea what it all meant until that night when I went to the theater and overheard some of the boys in my own company who had been to a matinee at the Hackett Theater describe Thomas' new play and how John Mason reads the price of a painting in the mind of a friend. It is strange that an idea as old as the hills, mental telepathy, should have made such a hit on the stage, isn't it? But it's all because the company in "The Witching Hour' takes the subject so seriously.

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"America is unquestionably the actor's real home. It is here that the drama is appreciated more than in any other country. Why, while I was in England last summer I met Henry Arthur Jones, the playwright, and he showed me box office records for one of his plays, 'The Hypocrites' I believe. He said, 'Look what an audience I had in this little American town they call Springfield. And see what England gives in Birmingham and Leeds!' The figures showed that for theatrical population the returns in Springfield, Ill., were about three times as great as in Birmingham.

"Many people have an idea that the intellectual drama has a better chance in Germany than in this country. It isn't true. Americans are more tolerant and are more willing to give an attentive ear to anything that is worth while than the people of any other country. Here at least the playwright and the player are allowed to attempt something new, to be creative. In Germany and in England, however, the stage is fettered to a greater or less extent by tradition. America may not like everything that is presented to it under the guise of intellectuality, but here at any rate one can get a respectful hearing, which is much more than can be said of the old countries.

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Mistaken About Audience.

"I think most of us who are connected with the stage have a mistaken idea about the receptability of our audiences. We are apt to undervalue the intellectuality of the great mass of people from whom the theater receives its support. For example, we actors and managers, and playwrights work days and weeks and months over some production. Not infrequently we work for a year to develop some particularly subtle thought or clever idea. We present it, and because the audience does not grasp it immediately we are prone to say, 'They don't appreciate the best in our art. They want the cheap, the frivolous, the melodramatic.' But could you or I have appreciated that particularly subtle point, when we saw it for the first time? On the contrary, we have shown very clearly that we could not, for we have been working and thinking, and sleeping, and eating, that particular point for days and weeks. If it is some hidden excellence, some philosophic deduction, which has required our undivided attention and study for so long, why should we expect a cosmopolitan and representative audience to catch the full purport in the brief time of the action of a play?

"I think that we should always bear in mind that the stage is first and foremost the home of the drama, and drama means, primarily, entertainment. When we can join art and intellectuality to entertainment so much the better for us, and so much the better for our audiences. Whenever we add another artistic touch, another new and wholesome thought we are building a nobler structure, but we cannot, we must not, get away from the basic fact that the stage is fundamentally an entertainment. Now I do not mean by entertainment senseless hilarity, but diversion, recreation for the mind and a stimulus for pleasure, or a change of thought.

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"Dramatic criticism I believe to be one of the really big forces in the uplift of the modern stage. And I mean by dramatic criticism not the flippant, satirical reviews, but those analyses which are inspired by the most altruistic motives, to point out our errors; such reviews, for example, as we get in Chicago, where a coterie of earnest, conscientious men have succeeded in raising the standard of criticism to such a plane that actors are anxious to produce their plays in that city. There they are sure of receiving a candid, well-digested opinion, free from personal animus. It is adverse criticism of this kind which really helps, for the actor cannot judge his own work. He must be of the audience to be able to appreciate fully the proper proportions of his impersonation. The man on the stage loses, to a certain extent, the sense of perspective and of contrast. It is the student in front upon whom the men and women behind the footlights must rely for careful judgment and a proper estimate.

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"I expect to have a very busy week of it in Washington. William Lloyd Osborne will come over to see me Wednesday, and we shall spend three days putting together the finishing touches on his melodrama, which I expect to produce early in 1908. Yes, I am branching out in the producing line, too. This play of Mr. Osborne's, by the way, has a rather interesting history. The author wrote it on a dare. The first play he ever wrote was not a success, and his club friends twitted him about it, some wagering that he could not write an out-and-out melodrama. Osborne, as a joke, wrote the present play and then stuffed it away in a pigeonhole. By mere chance he mentioned the fact one day, and I asked him to read it to me. He did so, and I believe I have discovered a valuable piece of property. He is to put the finishing touches on it while I am here, and I hope to organize my company in New York early in February and put it on the road.

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"Do you know it is simply frightful to have to appear in the same role time and time again. Sometimes you feel as though it would run you to distraction. I could not endure it if I did not have a different audience every night. The new faces and the interest which the people in front manifest is the only novelty offered, and I force myself to forget the play entirely and think only of those who are witnessing it. In this way I manage to arouse a little of the first-night enthusiasm for the work, but, Gad, it is hard. Really I had no idea how hard I was going to find it, otherwise I would never have signed the present cotract to play 'The Squaw Man' over the old Eastern route. I go from here to Chicago and then back into New York for a six weeks' run. I have been tempted to give a few matinees of my next season's plays, but I realize that this would be unwise as it would destroy all their novelty. But what a relief it would be to be anything on the stage except that Englishman-Westerner.

"I am very much impressed with the plan that has been adopted in England by theatrical managers of inviting the dramatic critics to dress rehearsals. Under our present American system of barring the critics until the opening night, after which they must hurriedly write their reviews for the next day's papers, both the critics and the production suffer. There is too much for one man to do. The critic has three distinct phases of a production to consider—the play itself, the staging with regard to the accuracy of setting and costuming, and the interpretation by the individual actors. Now, it is not reasonable to expect any one man to weigh in the proper proportion these features and do all of them justice in the hastily written reviews for the next day's paper. If, however, we allowed the critics to see the dress rehearsals they would have ample time to estimate the merits of the play itself, to analyze its strong and weak points, its artistic and its educational value, and its moral influence. All this could be written in advance of the opening night. And on the occasion of the premiere the critic could confine his observations solely to the interpretation given by the actors. I think in this one particular the English are far ahead of the Americans, and if I can arrange it I shall adopt the plan of inviting the newspaper men to the rehearsals of my own productions next year."

Had not an obsequious waiter appeared at this juncture and queried, "Will you have anything else, sir," Mr. Faversham would possibly have been late for his evening's performance, for I was urging him voice more of his interesting views on everything in general. Being reminded, however, that he had entered the grill room to dine, the actor hurriedly arose with the request that I excuse him as he wished to see Mrs. Faversham for a few moments before going to the National.

And thus "Favvy" left me, going toward the elevator with a stride that could easily cover five miles an hour.

RALPH GRAVES.

Picturesque Chinese Wedding

GARBED in the silken, gaily-colored robes of her race, May Gum, said to be one of the most beautiful Chinese women in the United States, stood by her husband, Chin Mon Lung, a wealthy young Denver restaurateur, and was married recently in Denver according to the law of the United States. Magistrate Carlon performed the ceremony, and Mayor and Mrs. Robert W. Speer acted as best man and matron of honor. The marriage followed one which was performed last week by a Chinese priest in Oakland, Cal., the home of the bride.

The American wedding was one of the most brilliant functions ever held in Denver's Chinese quarter. After the ceremony a feast was spread for the American guests, who indulged freely in dark lulu, chop suey, yakomein, and other Chinese delicacies and dainties.

The wedding was performed and the feast was spread in a hall at 2040 Market street, which has been used in the past as a Chinese gaming place, and which was decorated for the occasion with priceless Chinese tapestries, especially imported from the Orient by the wealthy relatives of the bride and groom. Look Wing Yuen, the brother-in-law of the groom, who owns the building, and who is said to possess a great fortune in good American gold, was master of ceremonies and saw to it that there was no hitch in the proceedings, which had previously been been rehearsed.

Chinese men, women, and children, all relatives and close friends of the contracting parties, attended in all the brilliancy of their native dress, but only the relatives stayed to the feast with the American guests. Both bride and groom are educated in several languages, and in perfect English they answered that each took the other for weal or woe. The bride, who was very shy, carried an immense bunch of white roses, which were given her by Miss Gertrude Halleck, and blushingly she often hid her face among the posies, or held her wide silken sleeve over her eyes to hide herself from the curious gaze of the American guests. When the couple were pronounced man and wife the guests began kissing the bride in good old American fashion, which caused her to fairly burn with blushes, and did not seem to please the groom or his august and dignified brother-in-law.

Since the popular Chin Mon Lung returned to Denver from San Francisco with his beautiful bride, there has been much rejoicing and celebration in Chinatown society. More than $1,000 worth of fireworks have been exploded by the wealthy families, and the amount expended for foodstuffs and decorations is said to have been large.

WHY HUMAN LOVE IS ALWAYS FICKLE

By MAX NORDAU.

AMONG ten thousand pairs of lovers there is barely one in which the man and woman love each other throughout their entire lives, to the exclusion of all others—not a single couple who would invent the perpetual single marriage to answer their own requirements if it did not already exist. But there are sure to be nine thousand nine hundred who at some period in their lives experienced a strong desire to unite themselves with a certain individual, were happy if able to gratify this desire, suffered bitterly if it remained unfulfilled, and notwithstanding feeling the sincerity of the original, after a longer or shorter period, developed until they came to have entirely different, often diametrically opposite, sentiments for the objects of their former passionate affection.

Have these couples the right to get married? Undoubtedly. Their union must be promoted in the interest of the race. But will a lifelong single marriage be compatible permanently with their happiness? No honest observer of real life can reply affirmatively to this question.

The fact is that man is not a monogamous being, and all institutions which are founded on the acceptance of monogamy are more or less unnatural, more or less of a constraint to him.

Inherited ideas which have become very deeply rooted in the human mind in the course of centuries of transmission prove nothing against this biological fact.

Let us listen very closely to the stillest, smallest voices in the hearts of lovers! Does the beloved being really fill the heart so completely that there is no room left for a wish or even for a perception outside of it which has some other being for its object? I deny it. If we are honest we must allow that man and woman, even in the highest paroxysms of a newborn love, keep an obscure corner in their souls which is not illuminated by the beams of the concrete passion, where lurk the germs of diverging sympathies and desires.

We keep these germs concealed, owing, perhaps, to a sense of honor, instilled into us by our training. We do not allow them to develop at once, but we are continually conscious of their existence, and we feel that they would soon grow to be large and strong if we did not prevent their development.

It may sound very shocking, yet I must say it—we can even love several individuals at the same time with nearly equal tenderness, and we need not lie when we assure each one of our passion.